



Israel and U.S.A.: Toward a New Pact

Author(s): Eqbal Ahmad

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of Dulles, they postulate that Western interests in the Middle East are threatened not because of U.S. support for Israel, but because there is still a "power-vacuum" felt by Britain, and which both NATO and the Baghdad Pact (CENTO) have failed to fill. Hence a new "constellation of power" must be introduced to insure stability and control in that region.

(2) The "radical-nationalist" regimes of Egypt, Syria and Sudan are viewed as being strategically ("closing of the canal hurts the Communists more than it hurts us" is common comment in Washington) and economically dispensable. However, they are regarded apprehensively as principal threats to the "stability" of the countries where U.S. interests are paramount - Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the Sheikdoms of the Gulf, Jordan, Lebanon, and Iraq (this latter in deference to British assurances of Iraqi malleability). This fear has been slightly calmed by Abdel Nasser's death; but still plays a primary role in U.S. policy.

It is expected, that given a powerful American presence and tough posture, the Soviet Union shall help "contain" the radical-nationalists. The extraordinarily provocative movements of the Sixth Fleet during the Jordanian Crisis was designed to invoke such a response from the Soviet Union. States such as Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Lebanon are also to be aided in maintaining effective, loyal armies capable of quashing local opposition.

But it is Israel that is considered the surest guarantee of Egypt's and Syria's "containment". The effectiveness of Israeli "show of force" in discouraging "Syrian intervention" in Jordan is cited as confirming this expectation. Nixon is also reported to believe that in 1958 U.S. intervention "saved" Lebanon and Jordan. This memory is said to have played a role in his recent decision to intervene in Jordan in case of necessity.

The Palestinian Liberation movement is regarded here as another nuisance and threat to the stability of friendly regimes. However, officials believe that by judiciously combining "toughness and understanding", the Palestinian people can be pacified. White House and Israeli officials are reported to be sharing the view that ways must be found to isolate the militant guerrillas, and to encourage the emergence of a moderate Palestinian leadership and elite, endowed with a Palestinian but not a very strong Arab or revolutionary consciousness. Israel, therefore, is expected to expand educational and economic opportunities for the occupied population, and to permit some "liberalization" in the administration of the territories occupied in the June War.

The recent decision to permit the employment inside Israel of workers from Gaza, the return of some notables who had been exiled from the occupied territories, and plans for the establishment of an Arab college in western Jordan are steps in that direction. The idea of a "Palestinian State" with its capital in Ramallah, and consisting of Gaza and the un-annexed parts of West Bank is also favored. And Israel is expected to make some concrete moves in this direction. Thus sandwiched between Israel and Jordan, Palestinian resistance is expected to yield to a life of permanent moderation in a Middle Eastern Bantustan.

Will this blueprint succeed? Judging from past performance, its chances are slim. It suffers from the same fundamental defects which contributed to American failures in Southeast Asia and, in the Middle East, to the early demise of the Baghdad Pact: it runs counter to the on-going course of history, underestimates the power of emerging social forces, seeks stability in times of change and client regimes in a century of national liberation. Its fate is linked to the dying status quo of injustice, which 'develop' mainly in the direction of tyranny. Fascist Spain and Portugal, militarist Greece, monarchical Ethiopia and Iran, and Zionist Israel! In the second half of the 20th century these are falling dominoes. And the Dominoe Theory is an American product.

The speed and extent of the failure, however, will depend on the creativity and wisdom of the revolutionary forces in the Middle Eastern and Mediterranean countries. Each step the enemy takes posits new risks but also presents new opportunities. For example, the

increased collusion of reactionary regimes with imperialism will strengthen their coercive power; it will also enhance their unpopularity and internal contradictions. The task of revolutionary politics would be to bring these latter into full relief. Similarly, the expected 'liberalization' in the occupied areas is fraught with risks of a liberal Arab sellout; but given good organization and mature cadres, it could be an excellent opportunity for establishing a formidable infrastructure in the interior. As the Vietnamese have amply demonstrated, the most successful revolutionary guerrillas do not readily cut the roads. They get into the bus.

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EQBAL AHMAD

ISRAEL AND U.S.A.: TOWARD A NEW PACT

In an earlier article (Africasia, November 14, 1970) I had pointed out that the real decision makers in Washington promoted the Roger's Plan for some tactical gains rather than to achieve a settlement based on the Security Council Resolution of November 22, 1967; and that since the major U.S. - Israeli goals neared completion one might forecast an end to this latest phase of Dr. Jarring's mission. I had informed that prior to the cease-fire, complete agreement on tactical goals had been achieved between the Israeli government and the White House, although State Department officials appear, at first, to have been kept in dark over its details.

Subsequent events have substantiated our analysis. On September 29, Jack Anderson, a syndicated Washington columnist reported that the Roger's Plan was in fact drafted in the White House by Dr. Henry Kissinger. However, Anderson noted that State Department officials hinted "darkly that White House aides had botched the whole peace initiative." He conceded that "it is true that the State Department had recommended enforcement procedures that were never adopted. One State Department proposal that Soviet-American forces (presumably under U.N. command) police the cease-fire was rejected by the President himself."

This curious fact, that White House and Israeli officials obstructed efforts at creating a mechanism for supervision of the cease-fire is privately confirmed by U.N. officials; it has also been publicly stated by the Egyptian foreign minister.

In retrospect, the American rejection of supervisory arrangements is not surprising, for the allegations of Egyptian violation has admirably served the U.S. - Israeli tactical goals which included (a) dividing and confusing the Arabs; (b) discrediting Abdel Nasser; (c) sabotaging Dr. Jarring's mission if he interpreted Roger's Plan strictly in accordance with the U.S. Security Council Resolution; (d) created a climate for massive armament for Israel.

In this connection, it should be noted that the U.S. alone, among the big powers, has insisted on "rectification of Egyptian violations" as a condition for the resumption of Dr. Jarring's mission. On October 6, the U.S.S.R., French and even British officials expressed shock over American refusal to participate in the Big Four Deputies' talks on the Middle East.

Thus, evidence of American-Israeli collusion in thwarting a peaceful settlement is overwhelming. The tactical advantages obtained by first initiating then botching the Roger's Plan are obvious. That these developments favor the expansionist goals of Israel is also admitted. But Washington's strategic reasons in giving such total support to Israel have been less clear. In fact, the "enlightened" members of the American establishment welcomed the Roger's Plan in the belief that U.S.A.'s economic and power interests would be best protected by the success of Dr. Jarring's mission. Why then did the Nixon administration choose the unexpected course of sabotaging the chances of a settlement based on partial satisfaction of Arab rights?

A search for an answer to this question has led this correspondent to the conclusion that the recent events mark the beginning of a significant shift in the extent and intensity of U.S. - Israeli collaboration. This change has resulted not from Zionist pressures in Washington, but is the product of America's search for a new strategy to assure U.S. hegemony over the Mediterranean

Sea and the Indian Ocean. In effect the White House appears to have made a most fateful decision to transform Israel into a major force de frappe in the Mediterranean -- the leader of a yet informal Mediterranean Military Pact which would eventually supercede NATO, and of which Spain, Greece and Portugal would constitute the other members. We are witnessing the development of the Mediterranean version of Nixon's "Southern strategy" (which, at home, implies the realignment of the Republican Party with the forces of Right and exclusion from it of Centrist elements.) The paradoxical developments associated with the cease-fire in the Middle East as well as Nixon's Mediterranean tour have been part of the probings toward this goal.

The outlines of Nixon's new design emerged during his Mediterranean tour. His visit to the Sixth Fleet was expected to be an exercise in gun-boat diplomacy. But the manner in which he conducted the tour surprised many observers. He skipped France altogether. The stop-over in Italy proved a formality as was the return transit in London. Nixon set the tone of this tour with the declaration in Rome that "One of the primary indispensable principles of American policy is to maintain the necessary strength in the Mediterranean." (N.Y. Times, September 28, 1970). In the Vatican a maleable Pope had his "spiritual power" contrasted with the remainder that the "President of the strongest nation in the world" had come to visit "the mightiest military force which exists in the world on any ocean."

The scene then shifted to the aircraft carrier *Saratoga* which had been poised for possible intervention in Jordan; to Yugoslavia whose "neutrality" Washington cultivates; to Greece, and to Spain, both of which are favored as the Mediterranean Sentinels of Pax Americana. First, to the Sixth Fleet and to Yugoslavia: Before the President had departed, Robert Shaplen reported that "much was made in Washington of his deep concern for peace in the Middle East, and of his plan to ask Marshall Tito to intervene with Abdel Nasser and assure him of the purity and selflessness of our intentions in the Middle East." (The New Yorker, September 26, 1970). Reporters on the Sixth Fleet witnessed the suplicity no less than the megalomania of the man who heads the most powerful and currently the most destructive state in the world.

Saber-rattling was so important to Richard Nixon that he was angry with Abdel Nasser for dying at an inconvenient time. He feared the interruption of his plans to exhibit his military might, and is reported to have resented the cancellation of the Sixth Fleet's elaborate display of fire-power.

Max Frankel, a veteran New York Times correspondent has reported Nixon as asking the following questions on hearing of Abdel Nasser's death: "Did he have to match the Soviet gesture (attending the funeral)? Did he dare ask Marshall Tito to skip the funeral on his account? What would happen to the show of force if he retreated in confusion now? How would the Russians or the Israelis regard a president who could be driven off his course by the Egyptian leader even in death." So much for the purity and selflessness of intentions in the Middle East! With the help of Marshall Tito, who passed up the funeral of his avowed friend, Nixon held his course. It is ironic that during the days that the Arab people buried Abdel Nasser and 10,000 tons of American bombs fell on the Vietnamese people, the surviving grandee of the neutralist block wine and dined a man responsible for continuing crimes against humanity.

A presidential trip to Greece at this time would have been imprudent, for it would have aroused sharp criticism at election time. Hence, while Nixon visited with Franco, Defense Secretary Melvin Laird was in Athens giving what he himself described as a "high priority" to the "modernization of Greek forces." At

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Dr. Eqbal Ahmad, Fellow of Adlai Stevenson Institute of International Affairs, is a member of the editorial staff of Pakistan Forum and Africasia, a Third World publication from Paris. He is author of a number of papers and a book on Middle East. The above article was originally published in French in Africasia.

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the formal dinner on October 4, Laird assured the junta leaders of Nixon's "full appreciation of the importance of the strategic location of Greece," and his conviction that "peace can only be based on strength." (New York Times, October 5, 1970). Their discussion are understood to have been centered around the ways and speed of Greek armament.

More concretely, armaments supplies to Greece had already been resumed two weeks before Laird's visit, despite protests from influential European and American groups. The "modernization" of the junta will continue on unpublicized bilateral basis as well as under the cover of NATO. The U.S. government is now preparing arguments in favor of strengthening the Greek armed forces, to be presented at the NATO Defense Ministers meeting next December.

As Fulbright's Senate Committee on Foreign Relations recently disclosed, U.S.-Spanish military matters are treated with such extreme secrecy that for years even the Congress was not aware of certain basing arrangements between Pentagon and Madrid. Officials and informed journalists give no hint of the commitments Nixon made and the services he asked of General Franco. Publicly, Nixon began his Spanish tour (the first by an American President in eleven years) with the declaration that Spanish-American cooperation was an "indispensable pillar of peace in the Mediterranean." And, of course, "peace is based on strength." After Franco-Nixon meetings and work-sessions between high officials, Spokesmen of the two governments said only that "the discussions centered on the Middle East and balance of power in the Mediterranean." (New York Times, October 3, 1970)

If Greece and Spain are being readied to act as Sentinels, Israel appears to have been allotted the role of Chief Constable. It fits all the specifications of an ideal surrogate: Its military performance in 1967 has been a matter of unabashed envy to the Vietnam-frustrated Chiefs of the General Staff. Its technological sophistication reassures these officials who have deep faith in the decisive power of machines. Above all, its economic and military dependence on the U.S. is viewed as being permanent. The image is of Sparta as a surrogate of Rome. An irresistible opportunity!

As a result, Israel is on its road to becoming one of the best armed Mediterranean powers.

In my earlier article I had mentioned the \$19.2 billion bill authorizing the administration to use unlimited funds to supply armaments to Israel to counter "past, present and future Soviet deliveries to Arab States." On September 28, the day Gamal Abdel Nasser died, the Congress enlarged even so open a commitment, and gave Israel what the New York Times (September 29, 1970) described as "the most open-ended arms buying program in the world." In giving their final approval to the Military Procurement Authorization Act, the Congressional supporters of the Administration added new provisions, in the words of Mendel Rivers (Chairman of the powerful House Armed Services Committee), for "making available to Israel the full range of U.S. weaponry," and against limiting supplies to "only the sale of aircraft (Phantoms) and equipments (electronic) to protect the planes." The bill specifically authorizes the administration to supply Israel with "ground weapons, such as missiles, tanks, howitzers, armed personnel carriers, ordinances, etc., as well as aircrafts."

Officials here say that now they have absolute authority to supply Israel not only with weapons required to counter Soviet deliveries to Arab States, but "virtually any conventional American arms Israelis might desire." No other country in the world ever enjoyed so complete a commitment from the U.S.

The arguments which favored this new policy are not known in detail; nor is there enough evidence to indicate how fast and how far the U.S. will go in order to realize this strategy. Research and interviews yield only a general picture of the assumptions and expectations behind this policy:

First, the U.S. perceives its Mediterranean hegemony threatened by Soviet "intrusion." Officials here believe that

following the Johnson-Kosygin meeting in Glasboro, the U.S. miscalculated the extent of Soviet ambition and its capability for impenetration in the Middle East. As a result, they remained sanguine over growing Soviet influence in the area. Example is cited of Soviet military missions in U.A.R. Lacking sizable anti-aircraft carriers necessary for air-combat and deep inland penetration, the Russian navy was considered incapable of posing a challenge to the Sixth Fleet. American officials had felt sure that in an effort to overcome this disadvantage the U.S.S.R. shall not introduce Soviet personnel in Middle East, as it had not done so in North Vietnam. The news that Soviet pilots might be manning the advanced MIG's in U.A.R. destroyed both assumptions, aroused the deeply ingrained cold-war sentiments of Nixon and Kissinger, and intensified their hostility toward the U.S.S.R.

Second, the feat that American power is slipping from both Western Europe and the Mediterranean region is enhanced by the belief that France (for reasons of "Gaulist chauvinism") and Italy (because of "instability and leftward swing") have become unreliable allies. U.S. officials complain that neither country has evidenced the desired concern against "expanding Soviet presence." They believe that growing European search for detente with the U.S.S.R. blunts the cutting edge of America's European alliance; and makes NATO a doubtful instrument of American power.

In Great Britain, Washington retains a lingering hope and trust. But given its economic problems, its uncertain future in the Common Market, and the isolationist mood of its people, the United Kingdom is expected to continue to "abdicate its responsibilities" as a world power. As a result, officials envisage a gradual elimination of NATO activities in the Mediterranean, and wish to replace it with a new alliance of dependable states more or less dependent on U.S. economic and military power.

Third, given the economic and social pressures at home, the U.S. government foresees the impossibility of committing more military personnel abroad. In order to avoid serious opposition to an aggressive foreign policy, and to prevent the resurgence of "neo-isolationist sentiments" in America, the government is seeking to minimize direct involvement of American "boys" abroad by making maximum use not only of technology, but also of mercenaries and surrogates. The Mediterranean is witnessing not only the emergence of a "Southern Strategy," but also of a special brand of "Vietnamization."

Above all, this policy is predicated upon the resurgence of the Cold War outlook associated with the Truman-Eisenhower-Dulles era. As an ardent cold-warrior, trained and tested in that school, Nixon longs for the easy excitements and competitiveness of the bi-polar world politics of yesteryears. Hence he has the compulsion to create situations of 'bipolarity' wherever possible. As a result, he is particularly attracted to the lucidly stated but worn strategic concepts of Mr. Kissinger, the Dr. Strangelove of the Nixon Administration. While they seek Soviet-U.S. agreement on arms limitation as a means of cooling the economy, or Soviet-U.S. entente in Asia to counter the growing power of the Chinese Peoples Republic, they are also determined not to let the U.S.S.R. gain a position of equality in key regions like the Mediterranean.

From this it would follow that while U.S. and Russian policies in the Middle East may have specific points of convergence (for example both are understood to fear the Palestinian Commando movement as potentially disruptive of their respective 'investments') there is little likelihood of a serious, or lasting entente or collusion between them.

How will this strategy affect America's interests in the Middle East? Would it not intensify anti-American feelings in the Arab World, enhance the possibility of nationalization of petrol, and increase Soviet influence? To answer these questions one must inquire into official American assumptions and perception of Middle Eastern realities. Briefly stated three assumptions are basic to this policy:

(1) Officials here are convinced that power not popularity would determine their ability to protect American strategic and economic interests in the Middle East. Much as during the days

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